

brink of lawlessness and chaos.⁴⁷ Others, such as William Chadbourn, the white Wilmington Republican and businessman who converted to the Democratic Party under immense pressures, traveled to Chicago to dispute claims published by Wilmington exile William Henderson in the Chicago *Daily Blade*. Henderson was not banished from the city by force but was told to leave within hours of the first shots during the riot. An African American attorney, Henderson recounted his experiences for *The Freeman*, an Indianapolis paper. Henderson challenged the Democratic claims of negro domination of municipal offices and suggested that the reason for the violence was that the Democrats craved power. Henderson described the violence, as well as the flight from the city for his family.⁴⁸ In response, Chadbourn maintained that the unrest in Wilmington was due to the inefficient Fusion government and the Manly article. He said that he knew of no reason for Henderson to leave, countering Henderson's claims of threats against his life. Chadbourn contended that the solution to the problem was to establish limits on black suffrage. Ever the businessman, as leader of the city's chamber of commerce, Chadbourn's interview closed with claims that Wilmington was one of the most progressive cities in the south.⁴⁹ A. G. Ricaud, a former mayor and law partner of Governor Daniel Russell, gave an interview to the Baltimore

Sun. Ricaud had relocated to the North and was a respected businessman but was enlisted to throw his support behind Waddell's administration. Ricaud's interview expressed his support for white supremacy but denounced bloodshed even as he favored a suffrage amendment to limit black voting rights.⁵⁰

White Democrats also worked to ensure that their banishment and intimidation campaign succeeded in preventing the return of men who could effect change. The *Messenger* on December 20 warned banished men that to return would be to "tread on dangerous ground" and singled out Republican George Z. French. Another article justified the banishment process as law: "[P]ublic sentiment is primary law; primary law banished certain corrupt and offensive men from this community." The paper also warned blacks who might have "failed to comprehend or have forgotten the 10th of November" that "white men are determined to govern this city and county" and that "the 10th of November will prove to have been child's play to what the consequences will be to the negroes" if "insolent lawlessness" or "midnight deviltry" arise. The paper urged "decent" black residents to rid the community of troublemakers.⁵¹ When one banished man, African American butcher Ari Bryant, returned home in June 1899, he discovered that whites were still willing to kill black men who challenged their authority. After the whites held a meeting to plan reinforcement strategies, armed white men surrounded Bryant's home with the intent to whip him and, if he had not escaped

⁴⁷ For a discussion of narratives of the riot, including that of Waddell, see Appendix M.

⁴⁸ Henderson recorded his life experiences in a diary that is currently in possession of family members. The diary was not available for research in the course of this report but, according to excerpts read by a descendant during the 1998 centennial commemorations in Wilmington, it contains valuable information relative to the riot, his escape, and life after Wilmington.

⁴⁹ *The Freeman* (Indianapolis), December 3, 1898; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), December 25, 30 1898; *Wilmington Messenger* December 27, 1898.

⁵⁰ *Evening Dispatch* (Wilmington), November 16, 1898. The article states that Ricaud had served as mayor from 1891 to 1893.

⁵¹ *Wilmington Messenger*, December 20, 1898.